

19

FIVE YEARS' ABSTRACT
OF
TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY
FOR
PROMOTING THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,
THE
RELIEF OF FREE NEGROES UNLAWFULLY HELD IN BONDAGE,
AND FOR
IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF THE AFRICAN RACE.

Philadelphia:

Printed at Merrihew & Thompson's Steam Power Book and Job Office,
MERCHANT STREET, ABOVE FOURTH,
1853.

At a stated meeting of "the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race," held 6th mo. 30, 1853, the Committee appointed for the purpose produced the following Abstract of the Society's doings from 1848 to 1853, which was ordered to be published for the use of the members and others.

Extracted from the Minutes,

JOSEPH LINDSEY, Secretary.

ABSTRACT.

I. IN A SOCIETY CAPACITY.

1848.

A valuable "Historical Memoir" of the Society, from its origin to 1847, prepared by President Edward Needles, was published, and copies addressed to the Governors of the several States, to the members of our State Legislature, and to prominent citizens of this city and surrounding country. The Memoir, together with the Trial of Castner Hanway and the Report of the Visiting Agent, hereinafter mentioned, may be procured, free of charge, from the Officers of the Society.

1849.

Congress was memorialized for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and against the annexation of slave territory. The Pennsylvania Legislature was memorialized to restore the right of franchise to our colored citizens. Printed forms of petition of like import to both bodies were circulated, numerous signed, and forwarded for presentation.

A useful pamphlet of sixteen pages, entitled "Ten Years Progress: or a Comparison of the State and Condition of the Colored People in the city and county of Philadelphia, from 1837 to 1847," was published, and 1500 copies circulated among our colored population, for whom it was specially designed.

1850.

Congress was memorialized for the admission of California into the Union as a free State, and against the extension of slave territory.

Through the slaveholding interest a bill was introduced into our State Legislature for the repeal of the law "to prevent kidnapping, preserve the public peace, prohibit the exercise of certain powers heretofore exercised by judges, justices of the peace, alderman and jailors in this Commonwealth, and to repeal certain slave laws," passed in 1847.* An earnest remonstrance was prepared, and two of our members were deputed to present it to the Legislature, then in session, and to converse with the Governor and members of the Legislature upon the subject as they found opportunity, which services they performed to the satisfaction of the Society.

The following resolutions were adopted and forwarded to the Governor :

"Resolved, That the thanks of this Society and of the friends of humanity generally, are due to William F. Johnston, Governor of this Commonwealth, for the able and lucid exposition of its early principles and policy in regard to the question of slavery, contained in his message to the Legislature, accompanying certain resolutions from the States of Virginia and Georgia."

"Resolved, That as to Pennsylvania belongs the credit of having originated the first Abolition Society of America, and as some of her most distinguished sons have been enrolled amongst its members, this tribute to her justice and philanthropy is peculiarly appropriate and timely."

For the purpose of allaying the exasperated feelings of the colored people of this city, caused by the enactment of the fugitive slave law, 2000 copies of an address counselling them

* In 1846 and 1847 the Society memorialized the Legislature for the passage of such a law, and prepared petitions of like tenor, which were extensively signed and presented. In this good work many members of the Society of Friends, and others rendered valuable aid. Among the members of the Legislature none labored more efficiently than Charles Gibbons, Speaker of the Senate.

to forbearance, under the accumulated wrongs which were thus inflicted upon them, were published, and distributed principally in their religious assemblies, by the Visiting Committee, who embraced the opportunities thus afforded to enforce the counsels of the pamphlet.

1851.

The Legislature was again memorialized against the repeal of the law of 1847, before mentioned. Notwithstanding the efforts used by the Society and a large number of individuals interested, the sixth section of the law which prohibited the services of jailors, and the use of the prisons of the State for the incarceration of alleged fugitive slaves, was repealed.

1852.

Two hundred copies of the trial of Castner Hanway, charged with treason against the United States, were purchased for distribution. It was prepared by one of the Society's counsel, and is a masterly review of the case.

II. LABORS OF THE ACTING COMMITTEE.

1849.

The Committee co-operated with a number of citizens of Chester county, in an attempt to convict Thomas McCreary, of Elkton, Md., for his participation (with two other men who had been convicted of the crime) in kidnapping Henry Lee Brown, a free boy, residing in Downingtown. The matter was laid before the Grand Jury, and a true bill found. Gov. Johnston, of this State, promptly issued his requisition, but the possession of McCreary was not obtained in consequence of the neglect of an officer employed for the purpose. Abel Jeans, of this city, was arrested and held for trial for his alleged participation with McCreary, in case of the boy Brown, but was acquitted.

E. E. Massey and Marcy Fountain, of Maryland, attempted to kidnap Ann Brown, of this city, while on a visit to her

brother in the neighborhood of Wilmington, Del. Their designs were frustrated by the timely efforts of the Committee, some of whom visited her in New Castle jail. Several citizens of Wilmington were also actively engaged in the case.

John Jackson, a free boy, was confined in Elkton jail for entering the State of Maryland contrary to law. His discharge was procured by one of the Committee, who visited Elkton, and paid the fine and costs.

1850.

A successful effort was made to procure the release of three free men, who were confined in Norfolk jail, they having been placed there by the Mayor for safekeeping, in consequence of the attempt of a captain, with whom they sailed from this port, to sell them as slaves.

An unsuccessful effort was made to obtain possession of Julia Ann, a daughter of Phillis Ann Bayard, of this city, who was held by Thomas Harker, of Delaware, as a slave, for a term of years, and removed by him with his family to Illinois.

John P. Marvel, of Delaware, held as executor to his father's estate three children of Hannah Marvel, of this city, for whose redemption he agreed to take three hundred dollars. The money having been raised, the Committee deputed one of their number to receive and pay it over, and bring the children to their mother.

In the mean time Marvel sold two of them to his brother Joseph, on condition that they should be given up, if called for. This agreement Joseph did not deny; but his honor and humanity were appealed to in vain to induce him to comply with his engagement, and the agent returned with only one of the children. The other two have not been redeemed.

Pecuniary assistance was granted to Dr. Bailey, of Washington city, to aid him in prosecuting the claim to freedom of a family consisting of a mother, two sons, and a daughter.

The first case under the new fugitive slave law* that

* All arrests of alleged fugitives from labor herein mentioned, were made under that law.

claimed attention, was that of Henry Garnet, arrested upon a warrant issued by Judge Grier, of the U. S. Circuit Court, who had commenced the hearing, with doors locked, before the Committee heard of it, or could get there. When they arrived, they found the man without friends, counsel, or witnesses. One of the Society's counsel just then happened to come in and requested a postponement till next morning, when the final hearing took place in court hours, Judge Kane being also present. Garnet was discharged on the ground that the two wills offered by the claimant's counsel to prove ownership were not properly authenticated. Three hundred copies of the Legal Intelligencer, containing a report of the proceedings in the case, were purchased and distributed.

Adam Gibson, of this city, was arrested as a fugitive slave, upon a warrant issued by Commissioner Ingraham, who, after hearing the case, gave him up, but when taken to his reputed master in Maryland, he disclaimed ownership, and returned him home. In consequence of that act of the reputed owner, criminal proceedings were instituted against George F. Alberti, J. Frisby Price, and four others, concerned in the arrest of Gibson, and as witnesses at the hearing before the Commissioner.

1851.

An appropriation was made to aid in circulating the argument of Lysander Spooner, relating to the clause of the constitution, and the two acts of Congress, purporting to require the delivery of fugitive slaves.

Stephen Bennet was arrested at Columbia, as a fugitive slave, and brought before Commissioner Ingraham, but a writ of habeas corpus was sued out of the U. S. Circuit Court, and the hearing of the case removed from the Commissioner to Judge Kane. The man was delivered up to his claimant, but his friends immediately purchased his freedom for \$700.

A successful effort was made to convict Alberti and Price of the crime of kidnapping the free-born infant of Catharine Thompson, of New Jersey, while she was on a visit to this

city. The former was sentenced to ten, and the latter to seven years imprisonment in the penitentiary, but were both pardoned by Gov. Bigler before they had served one year. A requisition was obtained from Gov. Johnston for the delivery of James S. Mitchell, claimant of the mother of the child Thompson, for his participation in its abduction, but the Governor of Maryland refused to surrender him to the authorities of this State.

Euphemia Williams, the mother of six children, living in a house belonging to her husband, on Fifth street, near Germantown Road, was arrested as a fugitive slave, at the instance of her claimant, William T. J. Purnell, of Worcester county, Md., and brought before Commissioner Ingraham. The case was transferred to Judge Kane by a writ of habeas corpus. Before the hearing commenced, "the woman was surrounded by five of her children, three of whom were mere infants. When they were brought into the room where she was sitting, large drops of sweat stood upon her face, indicating the intense agony of mind she was suffering. It was a sorrowful sight." The trial occupied a considerable portion of two days, during which time the court-room and all the avenues leading to it were densely crowded, a large number of respectable women being in attendance. The crowd in front and rear of the State-house was also very large. The concluding paragraph of Judge Kane's summing up is here given. "The question is, whether two witnesses for the claimant, who have not seen the respondent for twenty-three, one for twenty-four years, are to be believed in preference to four witnesses on the other side, three of whom have seen her frequently since 1826, and known her as Euphemia Williams, and the fourth who has not seen her for a quarter of a century, but testifies that when they were children they used to jest each other about scars, which they still bear upon their persons. I am bound to say that the proof by the four witnesses has not been overthrown by the contrary evidence of the two who only recognized her when they called on her with the Marshal. One says he called her Mahala Purnell

as soon as he saw her. He might be mistaken. He inferred he would find her at the place to which he went. There were three persons in the room, Mahala Richardson, whom he knew, a young girl, and the prisoner. If she had been alone his recognition would have been of no avail. The fact is obvious to this Court, that the respondent has no peculiar physiognomy or gait. It has been shown she has no peculiarity of voice. I cannot but feel that the fact alleged by the claimant is very doubtful, when the witnesses without mark or peculiarity, testify that they can readily recognise the girl of fifteen in the woman of forty. The prisoner is therefore discharged."

Hannah Dellam, and her son, ten years of age, alias 'Helen and Dick,' were arrested at Columbia, and brought before Commissioner Ingraham, and removed from his jurisdiction by a writ of habeas corpus, for hearing before Judge Kane. The result was that they were given up to the claimant, John Perdu, of Baltimore.

John Henderson, an officer of the Marshal's police, was bound over for trial for misdemeanor in obstructing the service of a writ of habeas corpus upon Capt. Davis, of a Baltimore steamboat, to produce the body of an alleged fugitive slave, brought to this city from Reading. The informant in the case afterward went to California, and the case dropped.

Daniel Hawkins, of Lancaster, and Benjamin Hall and Cassy Harris, of Christiana, were all arrested within a few weeks of each other, and brought before Commissioner Ingraham for hearing. In the cases of Hawkins and Hall no good defence could be made. In the case of Cassy Harris a fair defence could have been made, and perhaps her freedom secured, but the Commissioner would not allow her counsel time to procure a copy of the will of the claimant's father, which it was supposed contained a clause respecting her manumission, nor would he allow the claimant himself to be examined upon that point. They were all delivered up.

The alleged Christiana treason cases demanded and received the attention of the Committee, from the com-

mencement till they were all disposed of. The amount of service rendered during the time is known to but few besides themselves and the innocent victims of that atrocious government persecution. The result of those cases, in which so many innocent men were implicated, forms a chapter in the history of federal government jurisprudence which will be read with astonishment long after the actors in it are removed from this state of being.

1852.

Richard J. Somerville, of Calvert county, Md., died in 1830, leaving all his slaves, eight or nine in number, with their increase, free at different periods thereafter. On investigating the case, it was found that nothing could be done for them, they having been sold many years since by order of Court. The claims against the estate were presented by the mother of the testator, and are believed to have been made for the purpose of frustrating his benevolent intentions. Had the slaves been able to make early application to those who were disposed to assist them, their freedom could probably have been secured.

Ann Robinson, of this city, was unfortunately advised to look after some property formerly in possession of her grandfather in Talbot county, Md. By so doing, she and a little grandson who accompanied her, were arrested, and would have been sold as slaves, if the Committee had not paid their fines and costs, and brought them back.

During several months of this year the Committee gave unwearied attention to the cases of Rachel and Elizabeth Parker, two free girls, who were kidnapped from Chester county. Elizabeth was compelled by threats to acknowledge herself the slave of her claimant, and afterwards sold to New Orleans. A considerable amount of time and money was spent to bring her back to Baltimore. Rachel was taken a week or two after her sister, and detained in Baltimore through the exertions of a few friends there, till her case could be inquired into. She was also threatened, but persisted in calling her-

self free. Their trial was delayed for many months, during which time they were confined in a slave prison. Their freedom was finally proven so triumphantly, that the counsel for the claimant abandoned the cases.

The following narrative of the girls, which was published by the Committee in the daily newspapers of this city, is here subjoined, as an illustration of the operation of the Fugitive Slave Law upon our free colored population.

RACHAEL PARKER'S NARRATIVE.

I was taken from Joseph C. Miller's about 12 o'clock on Tuesday, (Dec. 30th, 1851,) by two men who came up to the house by the *back* door. One came in and asked Mrs. Miller where Jesse McCreary lived, and then seized me by the arm, and pulled me out of the house. Mrs. Miller called to her husband, who was in the *front* porch, and he ran out and seized the man by the collar, and tried to stop him. The other, with an oath, then told him to take his hands off, and if he touched me he would kill him. He then told Miller that I belonged to Schoolfield, in Baltimore. They then hurried me to a wagon, where there was another large man, put me in, and drove off.

Mr. Miller ran across the field to head the wagon, and picked up a stake to run through the wheel, when one of the men pulled out a sword, (I think it was a sword, I never saw one,) and threatened to cut Miller's arm off. Pollock's wagon being in the way, and he refusing to get out of the road, we turned off to the left. After we rode away, one of the men tore a hole in the back of the carriage, to look out and see if they were coming after us, and they said they wished they had given Miller and Pollock a blow.

We stopped at a tavern near the railroad, and I told the landlord (I think it was) that I was free. I also told several of the persons at the car office, and a very nice-looking man at the car office was talking at the door, and he said he thought that they had better take me back again. One of the men did not come further than the tavern. I was taken to Baltimore, where we arrived about seven o'clock the same evening, and I was taken to jail.

The next morning, a man with light-colored whiskers, took me away by myself, and asked me if I was not Mr. Schoolfield's slave. I told him I was not; he said that I was, and if I did not say I was he would "cowhide me and salt me, and put me in a dungeon." I told him I was free, and that I would say nothing but the truth.

MARY E. PARKER'S NARRATIVE.

I was taken from Matthew Donnelly's on Saturday night, (Dec. 6th or 13th, 1851.) Was caught whilst out of doors, soon after I had cleared the supper table, about seven o'clock, by two men, and put into a wagon. One of them got into the wagon with me, and rode to Elkton, Md., where I was kept until Sunday night at twelve o'clock, when I left there in the cars for Baltimore, and arrived there early on Monday morning.

At Elkton a man was brought in to see me, by one of the men, who said I was his father's slave. Afterwards, when on the way to Baltimore in the cars, a man told me that I must say that I was Mr. Schoolfield's slave, or he would shoot me, and pulled a "rifle" out of his pocket and showed it to me, and also threatened to whip me.

On Monday morning, Mr. Schoolfield called at the jail in Baltimore to see me, and on Tuesday morning he brought his wife and several other ladies to see me. I told them I did not know them, and then Mr. C. took me out of the room, and told me who they were, and took me back again, so that I might appear to know them. On the next Monday I was shipped to New Orleans.

It took about a month to get to New Orleans. After I had been there about a week, Mr. C. sold me to Madame C. who keeps a large flower garden. She sends flowers to sell to the theatres, sells milk in market, &c. I went out to sell candy and flowers for her when I lived with her. One evening, when I was coming home from the theatre, a watchman took me up, and I told him I was not a slave. He put me in a calaboose, and next morning took me before a magistrate, who sent for Madame C., who told him she bought me. He then sent for Mr. C., and told him he must account for how he got me. Mr. C. said that my mother and all the family were free, except me. The magistrate told me to go back to Madame C., and he told Madame C. that she must not let me go out at night; and he told Mr. C. that he must prove how he came by me. The magistrate afterwards called on Mrs. C., at her house, and had a long talk with her in the parlor. I do not know what he said, as they were by themselves. About a month afterwards, I was sent back to Baltimore. I lived with Madame C. about six months.

There were six slaves came in the vessel with me to Baltimore, who belonged to Mr. D., and were returned because they were sickly.

A man called to see me at the jail after I came back to Baltimore, and told me that I must say I was Mr. Schoolfield's slave, and that if I did not do it, he would kill me the first time he got a chance. He said Rachel (her sister) said she came from Baltimore, and was Mr. Schoolfield's slave. Afterwards some gentlemen called on me, (Judge Campbell and Judge Bell of Philadelphia, and William H. Norris, Esq., of Baltimore,) and I told them I was Mr. Schoolfield's

slave. They said they were my friends, and I must tell them the truth. I then told them who I was, and all about it.

When I was in New Orleans, Mr. C. whipped me because I said that I was free.

Elizabeth, by her own account above, was seized and taken from Pennsylvania, Dec. 6th or 13th, 1851, which is confirmed by other testimony.

III. DOINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

1848.

The Infant School under the care of the Board, received the attention usually given to it in previous years.

1849.

The care of the School was continued, and a small appropriation was made to a private school kept by Ishmael Locke.

1850.

In addition to the care of the School, appropriations were made to the Ragged School in Bedford street, and the Night School in Cherry street.

1851.

The Infant School having been discontinued near the close of the preceding year, an inquiry was made respecting the wants of several schools that were supported in part by donations, and appropriations were made to Sarah M. Douglass' School, the Shiloh Infant School, the Night School in Cherry street, and the Bedford street Ragged School.

An agent was employed for a little less than three months to visit among the colored population, for the purpose of securing a better attendance upon their several schools.

1852.

Besides paying the rent of the school-room in Bedford street, as in the two previous years, the Visiting Agent was again employed for about three months. His reports to the Board during that and the previous engagement, contain

much valuable information,* and show that the services rendered were greatly needed. Although the advantages of education are not appreciated by all who are the objects of the care of the Board, there is gratifying evidence of increasing interest on the part of the colored people generally.

DISBURSEMENTS.

By the Society, - - - - -	\$1,276 42
By Acting Committee, - - - - -	1,386 02
By the Board of Education - - - - -	2,715 68
	<hr/>
	\$5,378 12

The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, for the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage, and for improving the condition of the African race, was incorporated by our Legislature in 1789.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin, with about three hundred coadjutors, entered upon the objects embraced in its title, and since that period it has numbered among its members some of the best and purest philanthropists. Other institutions are engaged in promoting the abolition of slavery; but so far as our knowledge extends, there is no society whose special duty it is to protect the interests of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage. In this department a few individuals have been

* The publication of this abstract having been delayed longer than was expected, the opportunity is afforded to state that the Visiting Agent has been re-engaged for six months during the year 1853, and that all the important matter contained in the reports above-mentioned has been condensed and published, together with information since obtained. From the report we learn that there are six Public, fifteen Charity, and seventeen Private Schools, devoted to the colored people. Of the Charity Schools, two belong to the class called Ragged Schools, three are connected with the House of Refuge and the Orphan's Shelter, and three are Night Schools for adults, kept only in winter. The Day Schools had enrolled, on the 1st of March last, 2,239 scholars. Of these, 932 were in the Public Schools, 982 in the Charity Schools, and 325 in the Private Schools. The average attendance for January and February shows an increase of 234 over the corresponding period last year.

constantly engaged; but those best acquainted with kidnapping and the heavy grievances to which our free colored population are subjected, continue to feel the necessity of an agency, far more reliable than that of individual effort. A reference to the minutes of the Acting Committee would reveal the efforts which have been made by them, and the gratuitous service which has been rendered by the able legal advisers selected by the Society. Much labor has been performed by them individually which has not been recorded, but it may be confidently asserted that the timely assistance rendered in the hour of peril, has been the means of rescuing hundreds from the prison-house of bondage.

Within a few years past the hand of death has removed many of our valuable members. We believe there are those who would cheerfully co-operate with us in carrying forward the benevolent objects of our Society, and would inform such that application for membership may be made to either of the officers. Annual contributions \$1. Stated meetings of the Society on the last 5th day of 3d, 6th, 9th and 12th months.

PRESIDENT.

Dillwyn Parrish, corner of Eighth and Arch streets.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

William Wayne, Schuylkill 7th street, near Rittenhouse.

Joshua T. Jeanes, 110 Arch street.

SECRETARIES.

Joseph Lindsey, 55 Cherry street.

Benjamin C. Bacon, Beverly, N. J.

TREASURER.

Caleb Clothier, 35 North Fifth street.

Philadelphia, 1853.

